Itibune Press Reporter www.DeWittMedia.com

Volume 133, Number 24

Glenwood City, Wisconsin 54013

Wednesday, March 9, 2022

Son of WWII veteran visits Glenwood City to honor Ellen Ainsworth

By LeAnn R. Ralph

GLENWOOD CITY — The son of a World War II veteran who credits Ellen Ainsworth with saving his father's life in 1944 during the Battle of Anzio has visited Glenwood City to honor her

Keith Giddens, the author of "Payne City, A personal account from a lone survivor during WWII, a member of the 3rd Infantry Division, 30th Regiment, 3rd Battalion, Co. K," visited Glenwood City March 1 and told some of his father's story at the Glenwood Area Historical Society Museum.

Giddens and his wife, Kristi, live in South Carolina. Their son lives in the Twin Cities, and while visiting their son, Keith Giddens also wanted to visit Glenwood City.

Ellen Ainsworth was born in 1919 in Glenwood City and graduated from nursing school in Minneapolis in 1941. She enlisted in the United States Army Nurse Corps in March of 1942 and served as a Second Lieutenant in Tunisia before going to Anzio, Italy.

Giddens' book, while not yet available in a print version, is available online through Amazon.

Giddens said his father, Vrozell Broadus Giddens, known as "Dock," landed in Anzio at 2:30 a.m. January 22, 1944. He had been in North Africa prior to what the soldiers had thought was going to be a beach landing an Anzio.

Instead, they were put out in 10 feet

Dock and the rest of Company K walked in nine miles to Bridge 12, where they started fighting the Germans. They went five days without food and four days without water, because they had outstripped the supply chain, Giddens

On January 29, they went back to Bridge 12 and learned there were friends there and not enemies.

Surely, someone must have water, Dock thought.

The Germans saw the movement.

In the movies, Giddens said, you hear the whistling of the mortars, but that does not mean anything. The fins whistle in the distance.

But if the shell is close, you hear "chunk, chunk, chunk" — and as Dock was drinking water, he heard "chunk, chunk, chunk.'

Dock Giddens was hit with a 50 millimeter mortar "that took out his left side," which included his kidney, spleen and part of his lung, Giddens said.

Somehow, the wound cauterized itself and Dock kept drinking water. He walked the half mile to the rail bed, where he was waiting to be transported.

A Second Lieutenant walked by, and Dock noticed he had a canteen and asked if he could have some water.

The Second Lieutenant noted that water was in short supply but gave Dock the canteen, and "Dad drank the water," Giddens said.

The Second Lieutenant "left my Dad and said he could walk back the nine miles," he said.

So, Dock walked the nine miles back to the beachhead. The temperature was never above freezing. His toes, feet and hands were black with frostbite, and he had a hole in his side.

"By the time he arrives, he's basically knocking on death's door," Giddens said. **Evac hospital**

Ellen Ainsworth was among the nurses who had set up the 56th Evacuation

The full invasion happened on January



FAMILY VISIT - Keith Giddens, who credits Ellen Ainsworth with saving his father's life during World War II, visited Glenwood City with his family March 1 to honor Ellen's memory. From left: Benjamin Giddens, Keith Giddens and Kristi Giddens. -photo by LeAnn R. Ralph

When Dock had landed, there were 36,000 soldiers from the United States Army and only 2,000 Germans, but then the Germans went up to 90,000, Giddens

When Dock walked into the evacuation hospital, they said, "You're going to die." Hospital personnel did not give Dock anything for pain or treat his wounds

because they said they were saving time, effort and supplies for people who could

live, Giddens said. Anurse named Rita O'Rourke put Dock in a body bag, and he dictated a letter to

his mother. The nurses stayed with Dock throughout the night, as did a chaplain. "The next morning, my dad was alive,"

Giddens said.

'Rita O'Rourke compelled the surgeons to do something for him - and my dad lived," he said.

The letter to Dock's mother was not mailed, "but he's not in good shape," Giddens said, noting that his father was 19 years old at the time, was five feet, six inches tall and weighed 125 pounds.

Giddens said his father had told the family nothing of his experiences until 1994, when they took him for a 50th anniversary reunion.

Most World War II veterans came back, did not see themselves as heroes, and went about their lives, Giddens said.

Ambulances At the reunion in 1994, Giddens said he met a major who had been with the 15th Infantry Division and who had been in a mortar division about two miles from where his dad had been.

People are wondering, why are the Germans bombing evacuation hospitals and Red Crosses? he said.

The major said he kept seeing ambulances coming down out of the mountains. He could not figure out why the Germans had so many ambulances, so he said, "We're going to shoot one," Giddens said.

On January 24 (or 25), 1944, they shot a two-inch mortar at an ambulance.

"That ambulance went off for about two hours. It was full of munitions," Giddens

The Germans were using the Red Cross and ambulances as a cover to get supplies and munitions to their front-line troops and using them to store weapons so they would not be bombed, he said.

"You know, if you cheat on a test, you

Ainsworth Honored Please see page 10

St. Croix County Board approves \$80 million for government center project

By LeAnn R. Ralph

HUDSON — The St. Croix County Board has approved issuing \$80 million in general obligation bonds to fund the expansion and remodeling project of the government center on Carmichael Road in Hudson.

The resolution to issue general obligation bonds for the government center project has been "repackaged" after the St. Croix County Board's vote last month to reject the resolution, said Ken Witt, county administrator, at the county board's March 1 meeting.

The Hudson Police Department has been removed from the project for a savings of \$10 million, said Adam Kastonek, St. Croix County public information officer.

St. Croix County is the second-fastest growing county in Wisconsin, and when the

government center was built in said. 1993, the population was 50,000. Today, the population of St. Croix County has almost doubled, and in 2040, population projections indicate the county's population will be 119,000, he said.

The increased population means there is an increased need for services, and more space is needed to provide those services, Kastonek said. Modifications were made to the

proposal for the government center based on concerns expressed by county board supervisors at the February meeting, he said.

Several St. Croix County Board $members\ expressed\ concern\ about$ the cost and allocating space for the Hudson Police Department with no guarantee that the police department would occupy the space or that the City of Hudson would cover the cost, Kastonek

so far is to determine the space needs and establish a budget. If the resolution to issue \$80 million in general obligation bonds is approved, then the design phase will begin, and there will be more opportunity for input from the county board and county employees, he said.

More space

According to information posted on St. Croix County's website, for the sheriff's department, the project will include a public lobby, training rooms, evidence labs, interview rooms, increased storage space and secure parking.

For judicial services, the project will include additional courtrooms, a children's waiting area for

SCC Board Please see page 6

A MEET AND GREET of area candidates was held at The Pumphouse in Downing Saturday evening, March 5. U.S. Representative Tom Tiffany, State Senator Rob Stafsholt, and State Representative Clint Moses came out to support local Glenwood City School Board candidates Nicole Miller and Amy Dopkins as well as District 17 St. Croix County Board Supervisor candidate Sean Lybert and District 19 St. Croix County County Board Supervisor candidate Jen Flanders. Pictured above from left to right: Sean Lybert, Tom Tiffany, Amy Dopkins, Jen Flanders, Nicole Miller, Rob Stafsholt and Clint Moses. —photo submitted

DC PR&D approves continued use of existing access easement in Town of Sherman rather than 66-foot wide road

By LeAnn R. Ralph MENOMONIE — The Dunn

County Planning, Resources and Development Committee has approved the continued use of an existing 20-foot-wide access easement instead of requiring a 66-foot wide road for a property in the Town of Sherman.

Scott and Anita Sykora own 33 acres on 410th Street in the Town of Sherman that has an existing house, outbuildings, well and septic with a 20-foot wide perpetual access easement to 410th Street and no direct access to a public road, said Tom Carlson, Dunn County surveyor, at the Planning, Resources and Development committee's February 22 meeting.

The Sykoras are proposing

to parcel off the existing improvements with 10 acres and are proposing to access the new lot with the existing 20-foot-wide access easement. The easement was granted in 2003, he said.

Using the 20-foot-wide access easement with the newly-created lot does not meet the 66-footwide road requirement in Dunn County's new land division ordinance, Carlson said.

The role of the PR&D committee is not to approve the Certified Survey Map (CSM), but rather, to determine the suitability of the existing 20-foot-wide easement and what conditions, if any, need to be met to provide for adequate access to the proposed new lot, he said.

Under the county's land division

ordinance, "existing public or private roads or easements that are proposed to provide access to newly created lots shall meet the requirement of this section. If a road does not meet such requirements, the subdivider shall meet with the town and [PR&D] committee to determine the suitability of the existing road."

The Sherman Plan Commission and the Sherman Town Board have approved the CSM and a note added to the CSM indicates the need for public town road access to the remaining land if the lots should ever be proposed to be built upon, Carlson said.

> DC PR&D Please see page 6

Dunn County Board discusses levy limits, highway funding with state legislators By LeAnn R. Ralph said Gary Stene, county board

MENOMONIE — The Dunn

County Board met with state legislators from the area during a special Zoom meeting February 28 to discuss a variety of priorities, including the state's levy limit law and generating more funding for highways.

Much of the county's operating revenue comes from the property tax levy for a variety of services provided to the residents of the county, such as the sheriff's department, human services, public health, veteran's services, highways and county facilities,

supervisor from Colfax and vicechair of the county board. In 2006, the state legislature

passed a property tax levy limit law that restricts the increase in the levy limit to the percentage of net new construction, he said. Whatever the intention of the

law was, "the effect over time has been to strangle local governments (in their ability) to provide the services and programs demanded and deserved by its citizens," Stene said. Since the adoption of the levy

limit law, the percentage of net

new construction in Dunn County has been less than the increase in costs for goods and services,

Although it has been a small difference from year to year, the cumulative effect has been to cause the county to fall farther and farther behind, Stene said.

he said.

The consequences are that Dunn County has had to spend from the reserves in the fund balance or to borrow money to help balance the budget, and borrowing

> DC Board Please see page 6

Ve're not just your hometown newspaper...

We offer so much more!

COMMERCIAL PRINTING

Envelopes • Invitations • Brochures • Business Cards • Letterheads Posters • Carbonless Forms • Advertising Flyers • Calendars • and more!

DIGITAL ADVERTISING

Be seen by thousands of online readers every week!

- Digital Buddy your print ad on our website just \$5.00 more per week
 - Monthly Banner ad \$250.00/mo Yearly Banner ad \$125.00/mo

Contact us today! 715-265-4646 tribune@dewittmedia.com

Ainsworth Honored

Continued from page 1

know what you think everybody else does. You think they cheat, Giddens said.

So, the Germans began bombing the beachheads.

Dock Giddens was alive in the **Evacuation Hospital on February** 2, 1944, and all of the other 542 men in Company K died.

The nurses and doctors could not keep up with the casualties.

Dock Giddens had turned 19 the month before, and he was still in recovery.

Bombs

The Germans began dropping anti-personnel bombs on February 12, 1944, and dropped bombs on the whole beachhead, Giddens

The nurses, including Ellen Ainsworth, were moving people out of the hospital as much as they could, but there were a few, like Dock Giddens, who could not be moved because of their fragile condition.

So Ellen Ainsworth decided to stay with Dock Giddens, "to help him, so he would live. They dropped an anti-personnel bomb on the tent and killed her," Giddens said.

"That's why we're here today," he said.

According to the website, www. womeninwisconsin.org, Ainsworth had been struck in the chest by shrapnel but worked with three other nurses to evacuate 42 patients to safety.

Six days later, Ainsworth died from her injuries and was buried in the Sicily-Rome American Cemetery and Memorial in Nettuno, Italy.

Scholarship

Giddens was accompanied on his trip to Glenwood City by his wife, Kristi, and their son, Benjamin.

While Giddens took a moment to compose himself, Kristi Giddens stepped forward.

"One of the things we wanted to share with her hometown — in her honor — because you don't hear much about nurses and the Red Cross ... we want to start a scholarship foundation in her name for (students to attend nursing school). We want to give a little bit back," she said.

Enlisted

All together, there were six wounded soldiers who could not be moved out of the Evacuation Hospital where Ellen Ainsworth was working to save their lives.

Dock had enlisted in the Army, but at first, he was not accepted because three of his brothers were already serving.

Earlier in the war, five Sullivan brothers from Iowa died together



NURSING SCHOOL — One of the photographs on display at the Glenwood Area Historical Society Museum that is part of the Ellen Ainsworth display is of Ellen when she graduated from nursing school in Minneapolis. - photo by LeAnn R. Ralph

the "heritage exemption" was and no relief, Giddens said. implemented to prevent families from losing all of their sons.

Dock had one younger brother and eventually got his mother to sign a waiver.

"Dad chose to go. Ellen chose to go," Giddens said.

When Dock had been asked why he chose to go, he said, "because it was the thing to do,"

Keith Giddens said. Giddens said he challenges everyone to do one true act of kindness "that will cost you dearly, for someone you don't know because that is what creates

society, community and a nation. "She chose to go and chose to stay with people who could not be moved. She did not have to do that," Giddens said.

"So Ellen — thank you for doing a beautiful act of kindness that cost you deeply," he said.

Giddens said "it means a lot to me" that there is a display devoted to Ellen Ainsworth at the Glenwood Area Historical Society Museum.

Work also is being done to obtain a Congressional Medal of Honor for Ellen Ainsworth, he

Ellen Ainsworth was the only woman from Wisconsin to die in

World War II from enemy fire. Short supply

Supplies were diverted to Normandy, where there were 150,000 United States Army troops, he said.

When Ellen Ainsworth was hit by German artillery, Dock Giddens also got hit again, and on his left side again. This time it took out the lower section of his heart.

Giddens said when he was growing up, his father would take off his shirt to mow the lawn, "and he had one funky looking left side. Scars all over."

But at that point, Giddens said he knew nothing of his father's story, only that he had scars.

Dock Giddens died in 2003 at the age of 78.

In 1994, Dock fell out of a deer stand and broke his back, Giddens

Dock was paralyzed from the waist down. He crawled to his truck, took a piece of pine stick and used it to push in the clutch and drove himself to the hospital.

The Giddens family motto is — "take one more step," Keith Giddens said.

Another saying of his dad's was, "Everything happens for the best," he said.

According to people who were at the museum March 1 for Giddens' visit, the knapsack, bedroll and a few other things were the The medical personnel at the only items belonging to Ellen aboard the USS Juneau, so Evacuation Hospital had no rest Ainsworth and her time during



HONORING ELLEN AINSWORTH — Keith Giddens, who credits Ellen Ainsworth with saving his father's life during World War II, was deeply touched to see the display at the Glenwood Area Historical Society Museum that is devoted to Ellen Ainsworth. Giddens and his family visited Glenwood City March 1 to honor the memory of Ellen Ainsworth. One of the items on display is Ellen's knapsack. Museum curators do not believe the knapsack has ever been opened since being returned to Glenwood City. -photo by LeAnn R. Ralph

World War II that had been saved. Ellen Ainsworth's father was said to have never recovered from

losing his daughter. The pictures of Ellen that are at the museum were donated by members of the community.

The Glenwood City Post Office was renamed the 2nd Lt. Ellen Ainsworth Post Office in August

The Giddens family also visited the post office while they were in Glenwood City.

Members of the historical society provided refreshments for the Giddens family at the Methodist church next door to the

A photo display devoted to Ellen Ainsworth also was set up in the church basement.

In the beginning

Joan Ludtke, a member of the Glenwood Area Historical Society Board of Directors, said she was "in on the very beginning of Ellen's

Ellen's duffle bag and bedroll were found in her father's house during some remodeling, and the person doing the remodeling did not know what to do with it, so he took the items across the alley

AD PRICES ARE GOOD

Wednesday, March 9 throug Tuesday, March 15, 2022

Credit Cards, EBT Cards & E-WIC

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

11

Sorry, No Rain Checks, Pricing Good While Supplies Last. We Reserve the Right to Limit Quantities

SATURDAY

12

Baldwin: 715-684-3307 • 6am to 10pm Sunday - Saturday

Ellsworth: 715-273-5500 • 7am to 9pm Sunday – Saturday

Cumberland: 715-822-4541 • 7am to 9pm Sunday – Saturday

Clear Lake: 715-263-2513 • 7am to 8pm Monday – Saturday • 8am to 8pm Sunday

Glenwood City: 715-265-4660 • 7am to 8pm Monday - Saturday • 8am to 7pm Sunday

Ludtke said.

Helen Best, as it turned out, did know what to do with the items and gave them to Wayne Peterson, who was one of Glenwood City's historians, she said.

Wayne asked Joan if she would take a picture of the items and write a story.

So, Joan Ludtke took pictures of the items and wrote a story about Ellen Ainsworth.

"I was the first one who started all of this," she said, adding that she felt privileged and guided by divine intervention to be the catalyst for launching the story.

Ellen was known to the older people but not to the younger people of Glenwood City, Ludtke

"And now people know we have a hero in town," she said.

"I was so touched that I was the messenger who could bring this story," Ludtke said.

Ludtke said she "had a funny feeling" when she touched Ellen's items "because I knew what they had gone through."

When Ludtke was finished taking pictures of the items, Wayne Peterson asked her if she

and gave them to Helen Best, had opened the knapsack.

"I could not open it. To me, it was a piece of sacred property. I don't think anyone has ever opened it," she said.

Ludtke noted that she and two other women are working on a history book of Glenwood City.

Ludtke joined the Glenwood Area Historical Society in 2004 and said she and Wayne Peterson had worked on setting up the museum on Oak Street.

Schones Tax Service, LLC

2152 Hwy 63 • Deer Park, WI

Tax Preparation Reasonable Rates

Over 40 years experience

Hours

Mon. - Sat. • 8a.m. - 8p.m. Call 715-263-2435

TUESDAY

15



715-643-2415

